

PEOPLE

Youth finds
lots of merit
in scouting

Jason Oraker and his friends show their allegiance by wearing the colors — in particular, a red neckerchief with a black arrowhead.

For Oraker, the allegiance is about values.

"I would say character development. Loyalty to one another. Trustfulness. Friendships to one another. Being thrifty and helpful."

Oraker, 14, is not a member of a famous gang — like the Bloods or the Crips; he's a Scout, as in Boy Scout — or, in Oraker's case, an Eagle Scout.

On Sunday, the Irving Junior High School ninth-grader was awarded his Eagle Scout badge at a "court of honor" ceremony attended by other notable Eagle Scouts, three generations worth: his older brother, his father and his grandfather.

"I don't think it's hard, necessarily," Oraker said. "You just have to have a

will to be an Eagle Scout."

In fact, Oraker's achievement was inspired by a similar court of honor ceremony nine years earlier involving his brother.

"I remember because my grandfather was the guest speaker there, too," he said. "I was determined to have him back. And he's 80 years old now."

In the intervening years, Oraker received encouragement from his father and older brother about scouting.

"My dad said that it was a good place to gain leadership skills, discipline — and to serve others. And my brother said it was a good place to meet other people, gain friendships — and just plain fun. And, oh, to work hard."

Discipline? Serving others? Working hard? Aren't those scouting values a bit old-fashioned?

"They are very pertinent to today," Oraker said. "I don't think they're old-fashioned."

"I would say that scouting might be necessary today more than ever to help straighten some of the kids out, to provide another way to be involved in a group. Families are breaking down. Kids are getting involved in the gangs."

Oraker joined Troop 2 of the Pikes Peak Council of the Boy Scouts of America in December 1988 and set about earning the slew of merit badges he needed to become an Eagle Scout.

In the spring of 1991, Oraker and other Scouts planted flowers outside the Pikes Peak Center and in the plaza behind the El Paso County judicial building; they have maintained the area ever since.

In August 1991, Oraker organized a project to spruce up the grounds outside the Marian House soup kitchen. "It took 120 total man hours," he said.

But it's not as if Oraker has much spare time. At school, he's a member of the track team, two different bands and the science Olympiad team — he won grand prize runner-up at the state science fair last year.

Why does he need to add scouting to those activities?

"Scouting is a challenge. And it presents new skills that wouldn't be learned in the school, such as wilderness survival . . . public speaking . . . lifesaving."

"Above all, it provides a place where you can become acquainted with people outside the school."

Another of his duties has been serving as historian of Troop 2, which will celebrate its 75th anniversary this month.

"We have 67 Eagle Scouts in 75 years," he said. "Over 1,000 boys have been members of the troop. Our troop was organized in 1917, seven years after the first troop in Washington, D.C."

Of course, the Boy Scouts, like other enduring institutions, have faced many challenges.

"I would say in 75 years the changes in scouting have not been all that great," Oraker said. "I feel that God should be in the oath. . . . Faith is an important part of life and can help build character."

In regard to the recent flap concerning the question of whether homosexuals should be allowed to hold leadership positions with the Boy Scouts, Oraker said, "I don't know enough about that to have an opinion."

That might not be the response of a politician, but a Scout can't help being truthful.

Oraker does know what he will tell a fourth generation of Orakers about the virtues of scouting. "Stay with scouting because the skills that they learn now will be invaluable for the time to come," he said.

"It will help them to become better people and productive people in the community."

Raymond McCaffrey's column appears on Monday, Wednesday and Friday.

STATE

Indian leaders vow to halt parade

Judge refuses to block Columbus Day event

By Ray Flack/Denver Bureau

DENVER — Angry Indian leaders vowed Tuesday to stop a Columbus Day parade in downtown Denver after a federal judge denied their request for an injunction and police offered no protection for their observers.

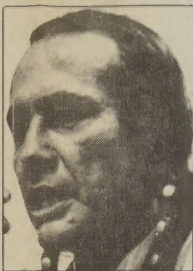
U.S. District Judge Zita Weinshienk dismissed a complaint filed by Russell Means, director of the American Indian Movement.

Means, upset because the judge made her ruling without a hearing, said up to 1,000 protesters will halt the Saturday parade through "civil disobedience."

He said that means people will lie in the path of marchers until they are arrested and taken to jail. "We are hoping there will be no violence," he said.

The dispute centers on the use of the word "Columbus" in the name of the parade, which was organized by the Federation of Italian-American Organizations of Colorado. This year marks the 500th anniversary of Christopher Columbus' landing in the New World.

Means insists any event in the name of Columbus would be a celebration of racism and geno-



Means: Up to 1,000 will practice "civil disobedience."

cide. His lawsuit asked that parade organizers be forced to drop the name from the parade.

The organizers have refused, saying they want to honor Columbus, who was born in Genoa, Italy, as a great navigator. They also do not agree Columbus inflicted genocide on native peoples.

Weinshienk said she could not grant an injunction to prevent the use of the name Columbus because it would violate freedom-of-speech rights. She said a hearing wasn't necessary because "there is no basis for relief."

Means said the ruling "only points up the fact that American Indians can't get a fair hearing anywhere. This ruling is like all the treaties the government made with us. They are treated like toilet paper."

Means said he had met with Denver police offi-

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AIM director Russell Means

cials and was told there would be no legal protection for AIM observers, medical teams or human rights experts who plan to videotape the day's events.

"They said they would arrest them along with the rest," Means said.

Glenn Morris, director of the Denver-Boulder AIM chapter, said, "This puts the city of Denver on a course with infamy."

CITY

Smiley N. Pool/Gazette Telegraph



Jeff Franklin, an emergency medical technician, takes a patient injured in a traffic accident Monday night to Evans U.S. Army Community Hospital at Fort Carson. The death of a woman after a car hit an ambulance broadside Sunday is focusing attention on the need for motorists to be alert for emergency vehicles. In some cases, there might be more than one heading to a call at high speeds.

Emergency drivers need motorists' aid

Fatal accident a reminder of risks

By Jim Buynak
Gazette Telegraph

About 6:45 p.m. Monday the call came out. An assault victim needed help in the 700 block of Boulder Street.

John Deister, a paramedic, and Jeff Franklin, an emergency medical technician, jumped into their ambulance to rush to the scene.

At the first major intersection — Platte Avenue and Circle Drive — all three lanes were blocked with motorists waiting for a red light to change.

With sirens blaring and lights flashing, Deister, the driver, whipped the ambulance into the left

turn lane, slowed to check the traffic and zipped through the intersection.

Deister and Franklin were at the assault scene minutes later, treating a man for minor injuries.

Such responses are routine for ambulance drivers. But they all know the risks of dealing with traffic.

On Sunday morning, the routine turned deadly. As an ambulance went through the intersection at Jet Wing Drive and Hancock Expressway, a car slammed into it broadside.

An 83-year-old woman in the car was injured and died Sunday afternoon. Her 83-year-old husband, the driver, is in serious condition at Me-

morial Hospital. The two A-1 paramedics in the ambulance suffered minor injuries.

Sunday's tragedy was the first fatality in the city involving an ambulance on its way to a call, said Mark Bruning, operations director for A-1 Paramedic Services, the city's only ambulance service.

For many people involved in the lifesaving business — paramedics, firefighters and police officers — it was just a matter of time.

"This has always been one of our fears," Bruning said. "The biggest risk in our profession is probably coming to and from a call."

"Any time you turn on your emergency lights and your siren, you dramatically increase the risk that you may be involved in an accident."

There are many reasons, Bruning said, why drivers might not move aside for emergency vehicles — loud stereos, quieter cars and maybe even impaired hearing. But, he said, it also appears some people do not know the law or simply ignore it.

"By and large, and I've worked in the system for 10 years, we come up behind someone with lights and sirens on and we have either people stop in the middle of the road or pull to the left," he said. "It seems there's that panic factor that sets in."

Colorado law requires drivers to pull over to the right as far as safety allows and come to a stop until the emergency vehicle passes.

Intersections are particularly hazardous, Deister said.

See EMERGENCY/B8

WEATHER

Winter due to breeze in for fall visit

Warmer temperatures likely to return by weekend

Gazette Telegraph

The first winter storm of the season is expected to dust the Pikes Peak region with snow today, bringing a sudden taste of things to come.

The cold front from Canada moved into the Colorado high country Tuesday, leaving many mountain highways icy and snowpacked, the National Weather Service said.

Residents of Colorado Springs and Denver might be greeted this morning by temperatures in the 30s, and those living at an elevation of more than 7,000 feet face a higher chance of snow that will stick on roadways, weather officials said.

The snow, mixed with rain, was expected to develop over the lower elevations late Tuesday night and continue through noon today, weather officials said.

Some areas in the central and northern mountains of Colorado had received more than 4 inches of snow

by Tuesday evening. The road from Echo Lake to the summit of Mount Evans was closed by the Colorado State Patrol because of snow.

Motorists traveling into the mountains today should expect winterlike driving conditions.

The weather service also advised hunters to be prepared for winter conditions if they venture into the high country this weekend. The first of three rifle seasons for elk and deer begins Saturday.

"Be prepared for the worst," said Eric Lundberg, information officer for the Colorado Division of Wildlife's southeast region. "Bring extra warm clothes, put a sleeping bag in your vehicle, and be sure to tell someone where you will be and when you can be expected back."

The taste of winter will be just that — a taste. Temperatures are expected to climb back into the 60s and 70s by this weekend.

Hispanic Heritage Month

1989 household income of Hispanics in El Paso County	
Income	Hispanic households
Less than \$5,000	879
\$5,000 to \$14,999	2,426
\$15,000 to \$34,999	4,494
\$35,000 to \$74,999	2,267
\$75,000 to \$99,999	129
\$100,000 or more	116

Source: 1990 Census of Population and Housing

INSIDE

DISTRICTS COULD MERGE: El Paso County commissioners consider a plan to merge four special districts created to build roads near Colorado Springs Municipal Airport to avert a default by two of them./B3

Opinion/B6

CITY/REGION

County and hospital settle dispute over medical bills for deputy's killer

Gazette Telegraph

El Paso County and the Penrose-St. Francis Healthcare System have negotiated a settlement for medical bills incurred by Robert Sickich, sentenced in August to life in prison for killing a sheriff's deputy in April.

Under the agreement, the county will pay St. Francis Hospital \$40,000 of a \$95,027 bill incurred when the hospital treated Sickich for gunshot wounds that left him paralyzed. The settlement brings total county expenses in the Sickich case, not including court costs, to \$127,980.

During Sickich's hospitalization, the county paid \$56,980 to keep him under 24-hour guard during his April-to-July stay and for a couple of days in September.

It also paid another \$31,000 to replace uniforms and equipment for the SWAT team after a judge ordered the items seized as evidence in Sickich's court case. The equipment was returned after Sickich pleaded guilty in August, but the Sheriff's Office decided to keep the new purchases.

The dispute over Sickich's medical bills, the first of its kind for the county, centered around the county's policy of paying only for medical services provided to prisoners being held in the county jail.

Sickich was shot by deputies during an April 13 drug raid on his mobile home. Sickich shot and killed deputy Hugh Martin during the raid.

Sickich was admitted to Memorial Hospital on

the day of the shooting and stayed there until May 18, when he was transferred to St. Francis Hospital for rehabilitation therapy. He was sent to the county jail July 15.

When Sickich's medical bills at Memorial Hospital between April and May reached nearly \$100,000, the hospital declared him medically indigent and applied for and received \$16,000 from Medicaid. Hospital spokeswoman Rita Burns said the city-owned hospital will absorb the unpaid \$84,000 because federal law does not allow the hospital to collect from other sources when Medicaid is involved, she said.

Likewise, Penrose-St. Francis officials said they will have to absorb the remaining portion of Sickich's bill at their hospital. County Attorney Beth Whittier said the settlement with Penrose does not admit any responsibility on the part of the county. The agreement was reached because both sides wanted to avoid long and expensive litigation, she said.

Memorial Hospital has also billed the county for treatment Sickich received after he was sentenced to life in prison in August. Whittier said those expenses will be paid by the county's jail medical contract service.

"There is no dispute there. He was in our custody at that time," she said.

Sickich has since been transferred to the state prison system, where he will remain for the rest of his life. Any further medical expenses will be the state's responsibility.

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PAID POLITICAL ADVERTISEMENT

CHRISTIANS, JEWS VOTE NO ON AMENDMENT #2

A vocal group of conservative Christians recently introduced a proposal to amend the Constitution of the State of Colorado. Some local church members have spoken compellingly in support of the proposed amendment, which would read:

Neither the State of Colorado, through any of its branches or departments, nor any of its agencies, political subdivisions, municipalities, or school districts, shall enact, adopt, or enforce any statute, regulation, ordinance, or policy whereby homosexual, lesbian, or bisexual orientation, conduct, practices, or relationships shall constitute or otherwise be the basis of, or entitle any person or class of persons to have or claim any minority status or claim of discrimination.

We, listed here, believe that we have become informed and educated on both sides of this issue. We have listened to representatives of Coloradans for Family Values and read their literature. Some of us have also watched the videotape they show. We also read about or spoke with members of Equal Protection of Colorado, a group which opposes the amendment and supports gay and lesbian rights.

We are local Christians and Jews who have decided to **VOTE NO** on the amendment to Article 2, and we will encourage others to do the same. Our vote is not a conclusion for or against homosexuality. Rather, our conclusion is based on several beliefs about civil rights:

- No citizen of the State of Colorado should be excluded from making a **claim of discrimination**. Our Constitution promises "equal protection" not "special privileges." We see no reason to change it.
- The "family values" implicit in this amendment do not create healthy family life. Hostility, fear, intolerance, segregation, and revocation of basic civil rights are inimical to the love and compassion that are at the heart of the Judeo-Christian tradition.
- Debates among Christians and Jews about issues such as homosexuality ought to consider all aspects of the issues, but should not result in Jim Crow-like laws or State-sanctioned discrimination. The best of any religion promotes tolerance, not prejudice.

When the civil rights of any group is threatened, it behooves us all to resist, lest we be the next group censured. Martin Niemöller, a Protestant minister in Nazi Germany put it this way:

First they came for the Jews, but I wasn't a Jew, so I didn't react. Then they came for the communists, but I wasn't a communist, so I didn't object. Then they came for the homosexuals, but I wasn't a homosexual, so I didn't stand up. Then they came for the political activists, but I wasn't a political activist, so I didn't protest. Then they came for me...and by that time no one was left to stand up.

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